

Application No. 09/867,944
Amendment "B" dated May 27, 2005
Reply to Office Action mailed May 20, 2005

REMARKS

The first Office Action, mailed May 20, 2005, considered claims 1-39. Of those claims, claims 26 -29 were rejected¹ and claims 1-7, 9-25, 30-35, 37-39 have been allowed.

By this paper, claims 26-29 have been cancelled, which are the only claims that were rejected in the last action, such that the only claims that remain pending are the allowed claims 26-29. It will be appreciated, however, that cancellation of claims 26-29 evinces no intent on the part of the applicant to surrender the claimed subject matter. To the contrary, claims *** are merely being cancelled from the present application at this time to expedite issuance of the allowed claims 1-7, 9-25, 30-35, 37-39. Applicants therefore reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of the cancelled claims in a related continuation, as is their current intent.

Accordingly, in view of the foregoing, and the fact that there are no other unresolved rejections or objections of record, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending application is now ready for immediate allowance.

In the event that the Examiner finds remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Dated this 27 day of May, 2005.

Respectfully submitted,



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¹ Claims 26-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 (c) as being unpatentable over Lemmons et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,442,755). Although the prior art status and asserted teachings of Lemmons et al. is not being challenged at this time, applicants reserve the right to challenge the prior art status and assertions of Lemmons at any appropriate time, should it arise, such as, for example, in a related application. Accordingly, any statements and claim cancellations which have been made herein should not be construed as acquiescing to any prior art status or assertion regarding Lemmons et al..